

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

RYAN BEZINET,

Plaintiff,

Case Number: 2:17-cv-11718
HON. VICTORIA A. ROBERTS

v.

THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS,

Defendants.

/

ORDER OF SUMMARY DISMISSAL

I. Introduction

Plaintiff Ryan Bezinet, a state inmate currently incarcerated at the Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan, has filed a *pro se* complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He names a single defendant, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). He argues that he was tricked into pleading guilty to a Class I misconduct charge during a prison disciplinary proceeding, resulting in the loss of visitation privileges. Plaintiff seeks injunctive and monetary relief. The complaint will be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B) for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.

II. Standard

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a) requires that a complaint set forth “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief,” as well as “a demand for the relief sought.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2), (3). The purpose of this rule is

to “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (*quoting Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957) and Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2)). While this notice pleading standard does not require “detailed” factual allegations, *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555, it does require more than the bare assertion of legal conclusions or “an unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). “A pleading that offers ‘labels and conclusions’ or ‘a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.’” *Id. (quoting Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). “Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders ‘naked assertion[s]’ devoid of ‘further factual enhancement.’” *Id. (quoting Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 557).

Plaintiff has been granted leave to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee for this action. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act (“PLRA”), the Court is required to *sua sponte* dismiss an *in forma pauperis* complaint before service on a defendant if it determines that the action is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c); 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). Similarly, the Court is required to dismiss a complaint seeking redress against government entities, officers, and employees that it finds to be frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b). A complaint is frivolous if it lacks an arguable basis in law or in fact. *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989).

To state a federal civil rights claim, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) he was deprived of a right, privilege, or immunity secured by the federal Constitution or laws of the United States, and (2) the deprivation was caused by a person acting under color of state law. *Flagg Bros. v. Brooks*, 436 U.S. 149, 155-57 (1978). A *pro se* civil rights complaint is to be construed liberally. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972).

III. Discussion

Plaintiff may not maintain a § 1983 action against the MDOC. The states and their departments are immune under the Eleventh Amendment from suit in the federal courts, unless the state has waived immunity or Congress has expressly abrogated Eleventh Amendment immunity by statute. *See Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89, 98-101 (1984); *Alabama v. Pugh*, 438 U.S. 781, 782 (1978). Eleventh Amendment immunity “bars all suits, whether for injunctive, declaratory or monetary relief, against the state and its departments by citizens of another state, foreigners or its own citizens.” *Thiokol Corp. v. Dep’t of Treasury, State of Mich., Revenue Div.*, 987 F.2d 376, 381 (6th Cir. 1993). Michigan has not consented to civil rights suits in federal court. *See Johnson v. Dellatifia*, 357 F.3d 539, 545 (6th Cir. 2004). The Michigan Department of Corrections is an arm of the State of Michigan and, therefore, both are immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment. *See Harrison v. Michigan*, 722 F.3d 768, 771 (6th Cir. 2013). In addition, the State of Michigan (acting through the Michigan Department of Corrections) is not a “person” who may be sued under § 1983 for money damages. *See Lapides v. Bd. of Regents*, 535 U.S. 613 (2002), citing *Will v. Mich. Dep’t*

of State Police, 491 U.S. 58 (1989).

IV. Conclusion

The Eleventh Amendment precludes Plaintiff's claims against the MDOC. The complaint is therefore DISMISSED.

The Court further finds that if Plaintiff elects to appeal this decision, he may not proceed without prepayment of the fees and costs on appeal because an appeal would be frivolous and could not be taken in good faith. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3); *Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962).

SO ORDERED.

S/Victoria A. Roberts
VICTORIA A. ROBERTS
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Dated: February 13, 2018